



Be Transformed by the Renewal of your Mind. Romans 12.2

Colombo Theological Seminary
Resources to the Church for the Transformation of Nations

INFORMATION

April
2022

Robbers: in the Passion Story and at Galle Face

Two kinds of 'robbers' exist in every society: the robbers on display and the robbers in disguise. How we recognise them and respond to them will determine the quality of our Christian witness.



Passion Week 2022.

All the Gospels speak about two men, who were crucified on either side of Jesus. These 'robbers' were typically highwaymen or brigands, who waylaid unsuspecting people on lonely roads and relieved them of their belongings.

During the time of Jesus, the word 'robber' had also become associated with an insurrectionist group fighting the Romans, who had resorted to highway robbery to fund themselves. This is the reason that the insurrectionist Barabbas is called a 'robber' in John 18:40.

Thus, the two men and Barabbas may be called Israel's *robbers on display*; everyone knew that they were criminals and the law was forcefully applied to judge them for their crimes.

How did Jesus respond to these robbers?



Well we know how Jesus responded to one of those despised men. Undoubtedly, he was a robber, who was being punished for his crimes. However, at that point, he was not protesting his innocence, he was pleading for his salvation: 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom'. To him, Jesus responds in the Jesus-way: compassionately and definitively – 'Truly, truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise'.

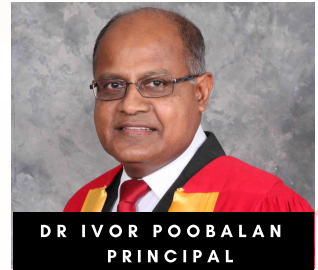
It is not accidental, however, that the Gospels tell us how, in the same Passion Week, Jesus encountered another set of robbers. These were the politically powerful: the ones who used their power over society to undermine justice and amass fame and wealth.

There were two such political parties in first century Israel: the Pharisees, who ruled Jewish society in northern Galilee; and, the Sadducees, who ruled Jewish society in southern Judea. These people were given a lot of respect and honour. When they arrived in their brand new Mercedes Benzes or BMWs, with gold jewellery jangling from their necks and wrists, and crowding the fingers of both hands, people stood up for them, made way for them, reserved the best seats for them, and called them their 'chief guests'. They, in turn, consolidated their power using twisted ideologies of divine endorsement. By controlling the Temple, the Sadducees extorted money from the masses through corrupt business practices in the Gentile Court. These were the *robbers in disguise* of ancient Israel.

How did Jesus deal with these robbers?



**FROM
THE
PRINCIPAL'S
DESK**

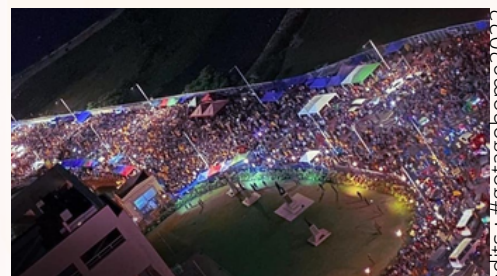


DR IVOR POOBALAN
PRINCIPAL

In a society where a few pandered to them and the many feared them, Jesus comes into the Temple on Palm Sunday with a whip of cords in his hands. As he upstages their show, he confronts the Chief Priests, who were running that illegal operation: 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for the nations. But you have made it a den of *robbers*!'. Though dressed in their regalia and demanding honour, these were Israel's *robbers in disguise*, and Jesus courageously calls them out and confronts them.

As I write, thousands are at Colombo's Galle Face, protesting for days. The protestors are calling out Sri Lanka's *robbers in disguise*: the corrupt politicians and bureaucrats, who ransacked the coffers and robbed a nation's unborn generations. On 12th April, the Central Bank declared that the second strongest Asian economy of 1948 was now bankrupt.

It is heartening to see the Church joining the national cry for justice. For the first time since Independence, people of all races and religions, professions and stations in life, in-country and domiciled abroad feel strangely united as Sri Lankans. And, they are not waving flags for a cricket cup: they are uniting for truth, justice, and equality for all.



13TH GRADUATION SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING AND COMMISSIONING

The 13th Graduation Service of Thanksgiving and Commissioning was held on 19th February 2022 at the Peoples Church Assembly of God.

Chief Guest: Prof Amal S Kumarage (Senior Professor, University of Moratuwa; Former President, CTS)

Colombo  Theological Seminary



GRADUATION 2021

The Graduating Class of 2021 was composed of forty-one award-recipients: the Certificate in Christian Studies (3), the Advanced Certificate in Counselling (9), the Diploma in Theology (1), the Bachelor of Theology (22), Master of Arts in Biblical Studies (5), and the Master of Arts in Intercultural Studies (1).



CTS Worship Team leading the congregation in praise and thanksgiving

The call to Servant Leadership

Graduates were presented with a towel as a reminder of Jesus' call to servant leadership, hearkening back to Jesus washing the feet of his disciples (John 13:1-17)



The Founder President of CTS, Ajith Fernando delivers the Charge to the graduates.

Flanking Ajith Fernando are faculty members Sanath Athukorala (L) and Julian Devadason (R), who translated the Charge into Sinhala and Tamil, respectively.

The Bruce Ker Memorial Community Award



Rev Dr Ted Rubesh (Chairperson, Academic Affairs Committee, presenting the award to Manoj L Pieris. This special award is presented to a graduating student, who has exemplified a commitment towards the wellbeing of CTS, practical help to fellow-students and staff, availability in times of need, integrity and humility when working with others, and a positive and encouraging spirit.



CHIEF GUEST'S MESSAGE

Prof Kumarage delivered a challenging reflection on "The Initiator-Disruptor Role for Christians", based on Matthew 25:14-30.

'The Leader as an Initiator-Disruptor is a role that may be personally uncomfortable. Though it includes improving what is good, it also includes disrupting what is wrong and evil.'

The Commissioning and Blessing



Recommending Pastors praying over the graduates.



A 'COVID-19' Graduation



Ivor Poobalan, presenting the latest CTS publications to the Chief Guest.



The Hymn for Sri Lanka 'To Him our land shall listen To Him our Land shall kneel All rule shall be on His shoulders All wrong beneath His heel'

Dr Vinodh Gunasekera leads the congregation in the recessional hymn.

Joining the team



JULIAN DEVADASON
BTH, MDIV
Faculty Member



CHRISTNIE EDIRISINGHE
BTH, MA (CANIDATE)
Coordinator:
Children's
Ministry track



HESHANTHA FERNANDO
Publishing Officer



M A RONAL SANJEewa
BTH
Relations Officer



AUGUSTINE ROGERS
Accounts Officer



KAMALEENI COLONNE
Front Office
Coordinator

Welcome back



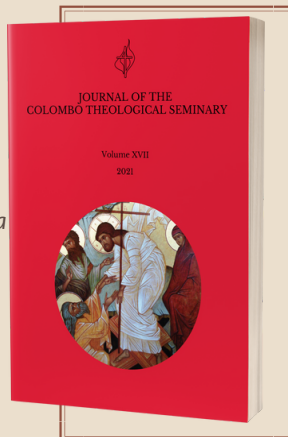
JEI SUTHAGAR NESHARAJAH
BTH, MDIV
Faculty Member
Congratulations to Jei on the successful completion of the Masters in Divinity at Tyndale University (Toronto).

CTS PUBLICATIONS

Journal of the Colombo Theological Seminary

The 17th volume of the JCTS was released at the CTS Graduation. Here's a snapshot of its contents:

- Can the Suffering God Help? The Doctrine of Impassibility in the South Asian Context | Nathanael Somanathan
- Towards a Theology of Race and Ethnicity | Prabo Mihindukulasuriya
- Nepotism: Church Leadership as Family Business in the Asian Context | Sanath Kumara Athukorala
- Hospitable Classrooms in a Sri Lankan Seminary Setting | Mano Emmanuel
- 'Identity Crisis' of Post-Colonial Church Architecture in Sri Lanka | Archt. Sagara Jayasinghe

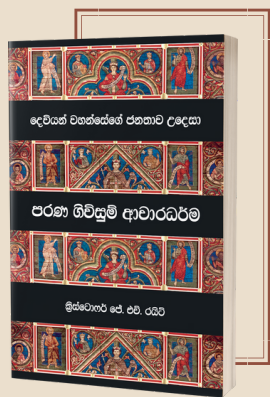


Old Testament Ethics for the People of God

by Christopher J H Wright

"Best guide to Old Testament ethics from leading evangelical scholar" (LibraryThing)

NOW AVAILABLE IN SINHALA



The BibleProject: Animated Videos in Sinhala

CTS partners with The Centre Church to translate BibleProject Videos to Sinhala



The Centre Church has undertaken the production of selected animated videos of the BibleProject into Sinhala. CTS is partnering in this project by translating the original graphic texts and audio scripts required for each video.

The BibleProject is a nonprofit ed-tech organisation and animation studio that produces 100% free Bible videos, podcasts, blogs, classes, and educational resources to help make the biblical story accessible to everyone, everywhere.

Saying Farewell

Earnest Nadeem

Earnest Nadeem holds the honour of being CTS' first overseas graduate (BTh). He returned to serve in his home country as an ordained minister of the Church of Pakistan as well as a lecturer in the Biblical Studies department of St Thomas Theological College Karachi. He went on to complete an MDiv at St Thomas Theological College Karachi (Pakistan), and a ThM at the International School of Theology - Asia (Philippines).



In 2015, Earnest returned to Sri Lanka with his wife and three sons, where he served as an ordained clergyman in the Church of Ceylon, and as a faculty member at CTS. During this time, Earnest was responsible for the Master of Arts programme at CTS as the MA Programme Coordinator. Under his care, the programme developed and flourished. Earnest's passionate and deep investment in CTS, his skilled teaching and coordinating have made a significant impact on the ministry. As Earnest, Maidhily, Enosh, Enoch, and Evans move on to a new phase of life, we pray that their service in the Lord will reach far and wide.

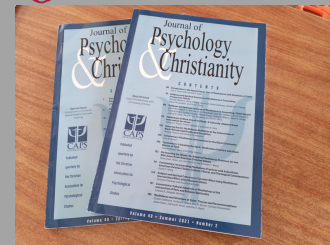
CTS LIBRARY

New Journals on Psychology and Christianity and Theology



The Journal of Psychology and Theology
published by Biola University

This journal shares recent scholarly thinking on the interrelationships of psychological and theological topics of study, exploring these interrelationships in a variety of contexts of mental health, counselling, education and training, organisational leadership, and Christian ministry.



The Journal of Psychology and Christianity
published by the Christian Association for Psychological Studies

Curates theoretical and research articles that focus on issues in psychology, theology, marital and family studies, social work and related fields; the relationship between theology and psychology; and, current issues related to these spheres that impact counselling practice.

CTS IN ACTION

resourcing the Church to face the challenges of contemporary times . . .

Organised by CTS

LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR CHALLENGING TIMES

(In English with Sinhala/Tamil simultaneous translation)

Saturday 26th March 2022
6:00PM to 8:00pm
via Zoom

Speaker
Ivor Poobalan, PhD
(Only for CTS Alumni and Programme Students)

Trilingual Seminar for Alumni and Programme Students

The online Leadership Seminar organised by CTS was specially for alumni and students on one of the five programmes of study. The speaker was CTS Principal, Ivor Poobalan. The simultaneous translation of the seminar, provided opportunity for participants to engage in the language of their choice. This was an initiative to encourage continuous learning within the CTS community, so that the body of alumni and students are comprehensively equipped to serve and minister effectively in challenging times.

CERTIFICATE IN CHRISTIAN STUDIES: CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Launched in Sinhala and Tamil



Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."
Matthew 19:14

In January, CTS launched its first fully online programme: the Certificate in Christian Studies (Children's Ministry).

The programme is specially designed to equip Christian Workers involved in ministering to children, and is delivered along two parallel tracks: in Sinhala and Tamil.

Students hail primarily from Chillaw, Hatton, Badulla, and Kilinochchi.



Get to Know a CTS Student

Called to take the Gospel of Grace to Street Children and the Poor

K Mano Lakshan Pieris

When God first called out to me in a dream I was 7 years old. A year later, in 1996, a minister confirmed God's call on my life to evangelism, preaching and teaching. Through 2008 -2013, in various different ways I received persistent revelations of God's urgent call on my life. These confirmed to me that it was time to respond fully to my calling. In 2014, I decided to commit to full-time ministry and signed up to study for a degree at CTS.

Through my unique life experiences God has laid a special burden on my heart to take the gospel to street children and the poor. This is what led me to start a street children's ministry in Negombo in 2015. In 2016 I was ordained as a Pastor at AOG church and started preaching. That same year God moved me to start the Friends in Christ ministry as a discipleship and teaching ministry to my school friends. Today, I am the father of a 4 year old daughter and 8 month old son. I also serve as a Life Coach at Living Christ Church and the Training Assistant at New Harvest. My ministry to street children and Friends in Christ also continues. Looking back at my life, I am humbled by how God has used me and where he has brought me. I thank God for his grace on my life that has helped me complete my degree in 2021, amidst many personal hardships and challenges. CTS is a special place that has helped me strengthen my personal life. I received the guidance needed to cope with various challenges and the wisdom to make the right decisions. The degree laid a solid foundation for evangelizing and discipleship, preaching and teaching in a biblically accurate and successful manner. It was CTS that laid the foundation for me to build a servant-leadership in Christ.



CTS is now on Facebook

To stay up-to-date on the latest news on courses and happenings at CTS, visit our page on FB
www.cts.lk

FOR TRUTH, EQUALITY & JUSTICE

A glimpse into how members of the CTS community have been sharing a Christian perspective on our nation's outcry against injustice and corruption.

• Rendering to Caesar

Dr Mano Emmanuel, Faculty Member

Would Jesus have approved of Christians taking to the streets in protest against their government?

[Click to Read >](#)

• It was NOT a Silent Saturday!

by Tanya Ferdinandusz, Alumna (CCS '09)

[Inspired by 'Do You Hear the People Sing?' @ GotaGoGama, Saturday 16th April 2022]

[Click to Read >](#)

• Greetings from the Galle Face Green!

Prashan De Visser, Council Member

Reflecting on what's shifting in our political culture and landscape

[Click to Watch >](#)

#02

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE IN SEMINARY, INTER-PERSONAL RECONCILIATION, AND BASIC SPIRITUALITY

with Dr Mano Emmanuel

What has Dr Mano's experience been as one of the pioneer female theologians and theological educators in the Christian Evangelical space in Sri Lanka? How important is interpersonal reconciliation for spirituality? These are some questions we explore in this episode.

beyond knowing

Faculty members
Nathanael Somanathan and Mano Emmanuel in conversation in Nathanael's podcast 'Beyond Knowing'. They discuss the experience of women in the seminary and church, Mano's book on Interpersonal Reconciliation, and her approach to spirituality.

[Click to Listen >](#)

How to give to CTS

Contact the Resource Development Manager (rochelle@cts.lk) for more details.

You can give in any of the following ways; Cash, Cheque, Credit Card, Bank Transfer, Online (USD and CAD).

CHEQUES

Address to Colombo Theological Seminary (Account Payee)

Forward to The Principal | Colombo Theological Seminary | 189 Dutugemunu Street, Kohuwela, Sri Lanka

• If you wish to make an online donation, please contact us for details + 94 11 5524257, rochelle@cts.lk